United Nations S/2005/736

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 November 2005
English
Original: French

Letter dated 23 November 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to attach herewith the report of the Government of Burundi on the evolution of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Burundi.

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated to the members of the Security Council as official documents of the Council.

(*Signed*) Léonidas **Nkingiye**
First Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

05-61686 (E) 251105 251105

Annex to the letter dated 23 November 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Report of the Government of Burundi on the evolution of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Burundi

I. Introduction

By resolution 1545 (2004) of 21 May 2004, the United Nations Security Council decided to authorize the deployment of a peacekeeping operation entitled United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), to support and help to implement the efforts undertaken by Burundians to restore lasting peace and bring about national reconciliation.

That peacekeeping mission was subsequently deployed in Burundi and became operational on 1 June 2004 on the basis of its mandate, explicitly described in paragraphs 5 to 7 of the resolution.

From that date through the holding of elections in Burundi, ONUB provided considerable support to the electoral process. With the support of the international community, Burundi has just succeeded in holding free and democratic elections at all levels, from the lowest to the highest. It is currently led by a democratically elected president and a Government formed through elections, and which therefore enjoy national and international legitimacy. Burundi has also provided itself with a Parliament and basic institutions which have been formed through elections as far down as the colline level.

With regard to security, the context has also changed. Security has been restored over nearly the entire Burundian territory, with the exception of a few pockets in the Bujumbura Rural province. The Government greatly appreciates the aid provided in this area as well as the collaborative relationship between the two parties. Taking into account the positive developments in the situation within the country, it would like to see ONUB complete its remaining activities as soon as possible.

Following the United Nations assessment mission on the evolution of the ONUB mandate, which visited Burundi from 16 to 23 October 2005, talks were held between the Government of Burundi and ONUB to take stock of achievements and see what remained to be done.

In the context of the evolution of the ONUB mandate, a joint technical working group on cooperation, with support from a joint technical committee, was set up in order to submit proposals regarding recommendations to be implemented jointly by the Government and ONUB.

Points raised during the talks concerned the modalities for the gradual withdrawal of the ONUB forces and other areas of cooperation in which ONUB might be active in the context of its evolving mandate. The conclusions of the talks between the two parties were as follows:

II. Modalities for the gradual withdrawal of the ONUB forces

Based on the talks, the Government of Burundi agrees that part of the ONUB forces, consisting of 2,080 troops, should be withdrawn as agreed from December 2005 through the end of April 2006. The same applies to the number of military observers, which should be reduced from 190 to 120. As regards the rest of the forces, a withdrawal calendar will be established by mutual agreement after an assessment, to be made in March 2006.

Concerning the modalities for implementing this operation, the Government of Burundi and ONUB will strengthen their cooperation mechanisms so that withdrawal may take place in an orderly and reassuring manner, with strict respect for the protection needs of civilians.

Concerning the reduction of the number of United Nations police, the Government, by mutual agreement with ONUB, agrees to the gradual reduction, by 30 March 2006, of United Nations police personnel from 89 to 15 officers, who will be based in Bujumbura and will be responsible for the training of the police.

III. Agreed areas of cooperation

Based on the talks between the parties, and within the limits of what was agreed, the Government wishes the remainder of ONUB's mandate to cover the following areas:

- Monitoring of Burundi's borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including Lake Tanganika and the cross-border flow of arms, in close cooperation with the Burundian security forces and ONUB.
- Support for the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the security sector reform now under way, in a spirit of cooperation with all concerned partners.
- Support for the promotion of human rights through the strengthening of existing capacities, especially those of civil society and of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi. In that framework, the Government welcomes the proposal, agreed with ONUB, gradually to replace international experts by national experts as part of the strengthening of capacities.
- Support for transitional justice as regards the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Chamber.
- Protection of ONUB personnel and equipment, with support from the Government.
- Demining, with emphasis on the strengthening of capacities.
- Support (logistical and engineering) for the humanitarian operations conducted by WFP and UNHCR.

IV. Conclusion

The Government of Burundi expresses its gratitude to the United Nations for having been at the side of Burundians even during the most difficult periods of the crisis in Burundi, especially through the agencies of the United Nations system.

It commends ONUB for the significant role it has played in the country, particularly during the electoral process. It wishes to continue its cooperation with ONUB by working with the teams that are not to be part of the first withdrawal, in the areas and within the limits of what was agreed.

In March 2006 the Government and ONUB will assess the situation on the ground and the progress made in implementing what was agreed between the two parties.

The Government remains prepared to cooperate with ONUB in communicating with and informing the Burundian people and the international community whenever necessary.

Bujumbura, 18 November 2005